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## UP FROM THE DEATH CELL

By JOHN W. KANE.

### Kane Undertakes To Help a Green Reporter Write a Story About the Prisoners

#### Synopsis.

Curly Kane wins his way to regeneration while in prison. A wild lad, he killed two carmen in a hold-up, and after seventeen months in Murderer's Row, got a new trial, with a life imprisonment sentence instead of death. He studies law, reads, trains himself to be a magazine writer, and conceives the idea of a law permitting parole for life prisoners who serve fifteen years. By this time he gets it passed. A new warden, with modern ideas, makes Kane his private secretary. After thirteen years, Kane walks alone two hours in the open country. He discloses to the warden a torture chamber, the tombs. They are obliterated.

#### CHAPTER XLII.

It goes without saying that I found little time for writing anything for publication. In an indirect way I managed to get a few of my own thoughts published, but they were not under my own name. That indirect way was a result of the calling of a few newspaper people—mostly beginners who wanted unusual coloring—at the prison.

One case that comes to mind was that of a young woman, a very youthful-looking little widow, who called on a summer afternoon. I was under a tree reading a magazine when one of the other men called to me that I was wanted in the warden's office.

"Mrs. C. here," said the warden, "is a reporter. She wants to ask some questions, and it seems that a friend of yours down town suggested that she talk with you. So, then, Mrs. C., he turned to her as he arose, 'I'm going to have Mr. Kane tell you all about it, if you'll excuse me—and I'll leave you now.'"

"What a splendid man he is!" she remarked, as the door closed behind him. And then turning to me, she

added, with an amusing little grimace, "You, being old at the game of writing, must think that I'm a deuce of a reporter."

"How long have you been at it?" I asked.

"Just a day or two," she laughed. "You see, I have had a few little verses published from time to time, but this is my first—"

"Why couldn't I think of the word? At newspaper talk I'm like my sister when she tries to talk baseball."

"As a matter of fact," I informed her, "I'm no newspaperman. If this is your first assignment, you're just one ahead of me."

"In a way it's a lot of fun, but I'll just bet they won't print a half dozen words of what I write," she said.

"Well, what are you going to write?" I asked, perhaps showing my amusement.

"I have no more idea than you do, maybe not so much."

"What did he tell you to write?"

"Well"—and she cleared her throat and tried to look very serious—"he simply told me to come out here and see if I could find a story of any kind—that's the way he put it—said for me to try to meet some of the men who have mothers or children or wives in the outside world, and to write something about the pathetic side of their lives."

"Who told you to see me?" I asked her.

"Bert Oldham, who used to work here. When I told him and Mrs. Oldham that I was to come—I went to him to find out how to act when I got here—he said for me to inquire for you and that you would know exactly how to advise me."

"Bert might over-estimate my abil-

ity," I suggested.

She Nominates Me.

"I believe I'd like to write something about you, Mr. Kane," she spoke with apparent deep thought.

"Don't. I held up a finger in warning. 'As a subject I'm old; and no doubt a great many of the people are tired of seeing my name in print.'"

"I have the names of several others here whom I'd like to see." She passed me a list. I went to the deputy warden's office, where the warden himself was then seated.

"That little woman in there is trying to write some kind of story about the place and a few of the inmates," I explained to him, "and I don't believe she knows anything much about writing. Here"—and I handed him the list—"are some of the men she wants to meet."

He glanced at the names. "Well, it won't hurt anything for her to talk with them, will it?" he asked.

"Certainly not," was my answer. "But what if she should get some kind of tale tacked together that might give readers a wrong impression about the policy here?"

"I hadn't thought of that," he returned.

"There's a way out. That is for me to write the article myself and have her name at the head of it as author. She's wanting to get into print with the story, and perhaps she needs a few dollars—I feel sure that I can work it."

He chuckled. "If she sees fit to have you help her with the story, and if you write just the truth, in fairness to all, why, go to it."

I Help a Bit.

Then the warden had the men whom she wished to interview called out. To each one I explained what was wanted, and with her secured from them some data concerning their home ties and their cases in general. Then, after the last man had left the office, I began angling for her to ask me to help further with the story.

"What's to be the title of your story, Mrs. C.?" I asked her.

"It will have to have a title, won't it? I hadn't thought of that."

"How would 'Lights and Shadows of Prison Life' do?"

"That's the very thing!" she told me exuberantly. "Now, why couldn't I have thought of that as quickly?"

"You might think of something better than that later on. And now

I'm going to suggest something to you about it—something that I'd appreciate from you, if our position were reversed. If you're willing, I'll write a kind of brief of what I should submit to the editor were he to assign me to a job like this."

"Oh, if you will!" she exclaimed. "You just have no idea, Mr. Kane how anxious I am to get this done properly, and with your help I know it would be exactly right."

"I'll mail you the skeleton story this evening; you'll get it in the morning—then you'll have time to tear it all to pieces, if you wish, and use whatever of the fragments you prefer."

Another Storm Breaks.

The newspaper reached me ahead of her note of acknowledgment, and I saw she had not changed the story in any material degree.

The next time she called, a week later, she thanked me in person for the help I had given her.

"But what do you think the editor said when he read over my story?" she asked. "He looked straight at me out of his old keen gray eyes and said 'Mrs. C., you did write this story—not by yourself!'"

"What did you say?" I asked.

"I made a bluff. I said to him: 'Why do you think that?' And he answered: 'I don't think anything about it—I know it.'"

"Then what?"

"Well," she answered me, "I confessed in a kind of weak and far-away voice, 'I did have a bit of help.' But he printed the story anyway."

My own part in that story supposedly written by her was not entirely to my conscientious liking, but I wanted to help her and to explain the new policy at the prison.

That new policy, however, was subjected to some terrible assaults during the second year of its operation, 1918. I got by without being singled out, for while my name was mentioned several times, it was merely as one of those who were, according to the opposition, being specially coddled and made over by the new prison administration. To this day it is a mystery to me why the warden was not attacked on the ground that he had one in my position doing his private work. Perhaps they never found it out; but if not, I cannot understand why. There was lots of talk of several escapes from the prison grounds and the road camps.

The Warden Stands Pat.

The warden himself took their fire without flinching. He went about his work, the main part of which was the constructing of state roads by the prisoners and the reconstructing of those prisoners themselves. Whereas under the old order of things men, when released from prison would be unfit for work, after a season out in the open air and sunshine under the new policy they would be ready for doing a full day's work equal to that of any other man. The warden made it a point to see personally that every released man secured employment before he left the prison, and he also had them keep in touch with him by letter after they had gone.

I myself kept those letters filed away. And among them were also scores of letters from the mothers, sisters, wives or other relatives of released prisoners, who, due to the warden's help in securing transportation for them, had gone to their homes in distant parts of the country and were there making good.

If the head of the institution was not greatly disturbed by attacks he was different from some of us prisoners. For my part I was kept in a state of half terror lest the pressure would get so strong that an order would come from the capitol for the discontinuance of our sleeping outside the walls.

And one day that very order was sent down. I thought, it would kill me to go back inside, and it was in reality much harder than entering the prison under the death sentence.

My work on the outside continued though, and because of late hours out there I began to go to my room occasionally rather than to go inside to sleep—and soon I was staying out again all the time.

I Apply For Parole.

One particular effect of that criticism was to make the warden's office redouble its efforts to recapture prisoners who had escaped. And the efforts were end to the extent that before the end of 1918 all but two or three had been found in different parts of the country and returned to the prison.

With the coming of the last month of that year, I laid before the state board of pardons my application for a release upon parole or otherwise.

My "fifteen years' actual time in the state prison" was not to be completed for a few months, yet I hoped the board would set a date ahead for my release.

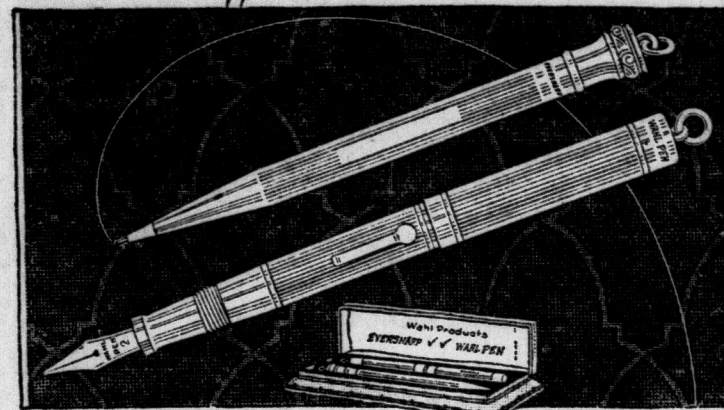
The pardon board met at the state prison in a specially prepared room next to the warden's office. That month's meeting came on Saturday, Dec. 21. It was an all-day session, and my case was called in the afternoon, then it was laid over until a few other minor cases were disposed of.

At 5:50 p.m.—I looked at my watch—I was called into the boardroom. The feeling as I entered that room was precisely the same as the one I had known almost fifteen years before, when I saw that jury filing into the courtroom. And as I seated myself in a chair at one end of the long table around which the seven members of the pardon board were then sitting, I questioned mentally: "Can it be possible that I am actually at the end of my imprisonment at last?"

TURNED DOWN: Chapter Forty-Three Tuesday.

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## "I Got It For Passing My Exams"

"GEE, George, I bet my dad will get me a C.C.M., too. I studied hard all year, and I passed my exams. well. I think I deserve a bike, don't you?"

"I hope you get it, Eddie. Then you can join the rest of us fellows in our runs out into the country and our picnics."

"I'm taking mine away on my vacation, too. There are lots of country roads to ride along and dandy woods to explore, some streams to fish in and other things to see, all within easy riding distance."

"Mother says it will be so handy to have a bike around. There's always the mail to go for and other errands to run."

"Well, George, I'm going to get my dad to go with me to the C.C.M. dealer's and see the new models—especially that dandy Curved Bar Sport Model and the other one a boy won't outgrow."

"Don't forget to tell him, Eddie, that C.C.M. Bicycles are away down in price. \$15 to \$20 less than the war prices. Also that they're made of English Seamless Tubing and equipped with the C.C.M. Triplex



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"If he says he's short of cash, Eddie, tell him he only needs to pay a few dollars down, and the rest in small weekly or monthly payments."

"And I'll offer to help pay the balance, George. There are lots of jobs for a boy with a bicycle during the summer holidays, delivering small parcels, running messages, and doing other things. It will be good experience and heaps of fun, too."

"Well, 'so long,' Eddie. Go to it and get that C.C.M. Bicycle."

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¼ teaspoonful salt, 2 tablespoonfuls Carnation Milk, ¼ cup oil, ¼ teaspoonful paprika, 1 tablespoonful lemon juice or vinegar. Put salt and paprika in a bowl; add Carnation Milk and mix thoroughly; add oil slowly, stirring constantly. Then add the lemon juice or vinegar. This recipe makes 2/3 cup salad dressing.

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